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c) wherein said automatically securing said trailer comprises automatically deflating tires of said trailer.

Please add new claim 24.

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24. A method of monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:

a) defining a planned trailer uncoupling area;

b) determining that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area;

and

c) determining a location of the trailer.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of pending claims 1-23 and consideration of new claim 24 is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicated that claims 2, 12, 14, 15, 17, and 23 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. As amended, claims 2, 12, 14, 15, 17, and 23 are in independent form and include all of the limitations of the base claim from which they depended. Claims 2, 12, 14, 15, 17, and 23 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, because there was not antecedent basis for "the picture" in line 1. The Office Action indicated that claim 19 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection of 35 U.S.C. §112 and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 19 has been amended to depend from claim 14, which, as amended, is in independent form and provides antecedent basis for "the picture." Claim 19 is in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20, 21 and 22 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 5,969,433 to Maggiora et al.

Claim 1 features a method of monitoring uncoupling of a vehicle trailer. In the method, a planned trailer uncoupling area is defined. Then the method determines whether the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area. When it is determined that the trailer is uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area the method determines the location of the trailer with a global positioning system.

The Maggiora et al. patent does not show or suggest determining whether a trailer has been uncoupled outside a planned uncoupling area. Item No. 6 on page 2 of the Office Action asserts that “determining that the trailer has been uncoupled *outside said planned uncoupling area*” is disclosed on lines 60-56 on column 5 of the Maggiora et al. patent. Entire column 5 and indeed the entire Maggiora et al. patent does not provide a disclosure of determining that the trailer has been uncoupled outside a planned uncoupling area. The Maggiora et al. patent does disclose detecting that a trailer is disconnected from a tractor and separately suggests identifying the position of a trailer. There is, however, no discussion of defining a planned trailer uncoupling area or determining that a trailer is uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area in the Maggiora et al. patent.

Applicant’s attorney, Kenneth Smith called Examiner Broadhead to ask what “lines 60-56 on column 5 of the Maggiora et al. patent” meant and asked if Examiner Broadhead could provide a cite in the Maggiora patent that discloses determining that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area. Examiner Broadhead indicated that he could not determine what he was citing to in Item No. 6 on page 2 of the Office Action.

Applicant respectfully submits that since the Maggiora et al. patent does not show or suggest defining a planned trailer uncoupling area or determining that a trailer is uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area, the Maggiora et al. patent does not anticipate claim 1.

Claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 3 depends upon and is allowable like claim 1 and further features periodically transmitting the location of the tractor or the trailer only when it is determined that the tractor or the trailer has moved. This limitation is not shown or suggested by the Maggiora et al. patent. The Office Action states that "Maggiora et al. discloses periodically transmitting a location of at least one of a tractor and a trailer *only* when it is determined that one of said tractor and said trailer has moved on lines 35-41, on column 3." Applicant respectfully asserts that lines 35-41 of column 3 do not disclose periodically transmitting the location the tractor or the trailer *only* when it is determined that the tractor or the trailer has moved. Rather, lines 29-41, col. 3 of the Maggiora patent discloses that the vehicle (remote site) 12 transmits response messages 26 in response to receiving polling messages 22 from transmit sites 16. The times of receipt of the response messages are used to resolve the location of the vehicle. The transmission of the response messages is not dependent upon movement of the tractor or the trailer as is required by claim 3, but instead is dependent on receiving polling messages from transmit sites. Claim 3 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 5 and 7 depend upon claim 1 and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 9 features a method of monitoring uncoupling of a vehicle trailer. In the method, a planned trailer uncoupling area is defined. The method determines when the trailer is uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area and automatically secures the trailer when it is uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area.

The Maggiora et al. patent does not show or suggest determining whether a trailer has been uncoupled outside a planned uncoupling area. Since Maggiora does not disclose defining a planned trailer uncoupling area or determining that a trailer is uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area, the Maggiora et al. patent does not anticipate claim 9. Claim 9 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 10 and 11 depend from claim 9 and are also in condition for allowance.

Claim 13 features an apparatus for monitoring uncoupling of a vehicle trailer. The apparatus of claim 13 includes a vehicle computer and a global positioning system. The vehicle computer is programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area. The global positioning system is coupled to the computer for determining the location of the trailer. The vehicle computer is programmed to determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area.

The Maggiora et al. patent does not disclose or suggest a vehicle computer that is programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area and determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside the programmed planned uncoupling area. Claim 13 is not anticipated by the Maggiora et al. patent.

Claims 16 and 18 depend from claim 13 and are also in condition for allowance.

Claim 20 features an apparatus for monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling. The apparatus of claim 20 includes a vehicle computer and a global positioning system. The global positioning system is coupled to the computer for determining a location of the trailer. The vehicle computer is programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area, determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area, and automatically secure the trailer when the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area.

The Maggiora et al. patent does not disclose or suggest a vehicle computer that is programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area or determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area. Claim 20 is not anticipated by the Maggiora et al. patent. Claim 20 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 21 and 22 depend from claim 20 and are also in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maggiora et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,917,433 to Keiller et al. Claim 4 depends from claim 1 which

requires defining a planned trailer uncoupling area and determining whether the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area. Neither the Maggiora et al. patent nor the Keiller et al. patent disclose or suggest these claim limitations. Since these limitations are not shown or suggested in the Maggiora et al. patent or the Keiller et al. patent, these references could not possibly be combined in an obvious way to render claim 4 unpatentable. Claim 4 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maggiora et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,625,335 to Kelly. Since claim 6 depends from claim 1, claim 6 requires defining a planned trailer uncoupling area is defined and determining whether the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area. The Maggiora et al. and the Kelly patents do not disclose or suggest these claim limitations. These references could not possibly be combined to render claim 4 unpatentable since these limitations are not shown or suggested in either patent. Claim 6 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maggiora et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,263,524 to Boardman. Claim 8 depends from claim 1, and therefore requires defining a planned trailer uncoupling area is defined and determining whether the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area. The Maggiora et al. and the Boardman patents do not disclose or suggest these claim limitations. Claim 8 is not unpatentable over Maggiora et al. in view of Boardman, because claim 8 includes features that are not shown or suggested by either of these patents. Claim 8 is in condition for allowance.

New Claim

New claim 24 features a method of monitoring uncoupling of a vehicle trailer. In the method, a planned trailer uncoupling area is defined. Then the method determines whether the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area. When it is determined that the trailer is uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area the method determines the location of


the trailer. This combination of features is not shown or suggested by the applied references.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-0630 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:
 - a) defining a planned trailer uncoupling area;
 - b) determining that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and
 - c) determining a location of the [vehicle] trailer with a global positioning system.

2. (Amended) [The method of claim 1 further comprising] A method of monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:
 - a) defining a planned trailer uncoupling area;
 - b) determining that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and
 - c) determining a location of the trailer with a global positioning system; and,
 - d) taking a picture of [the] a vehicle driver when it is determined that the trailer has been uncoupled outside the planned uncoupling area.

12. (Amended) [The method of claim 9 wherein said automatic securing comprises] A method of monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:
 - a) defining a planned trailer uncoupling area;
 - b) determining that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and
 - c) automatically securing said trailer by deflating a tire of said trailer.

14. (Amended) [The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising] An apparatus for monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:
 - a) a vehicle computer programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area;

b) a global positioning system coupled to said computer for determining a location of the trailer, said computer being programmed to determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and,

c) a camera coupled to said computer for taking a picture of the driver when it is determined that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area.

15. (Amended) [The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising] An apparatus for monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:

a) a vehicle computer programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area;

b) a global positioning system coupled to said computer for determining a location of the trailer, said computer being programmed to determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and,

c) a trailer battery backup controlled by said computer for powering electronics on said trailer, said computer being programmed to activate said battery backup when said trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area.

17. (Amended) [The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising] An apparatus for monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:

a) a vehicle computer programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area;

b) a global positioning system coupled to said computer for determining a location of the trailer, said computer being programmed to determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and,

c) a fifth wheel on said vehicle having a lock controlled by said computer, said computer being programmed to activate said lock on said fifth wheel when said trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area.

19. (Amended) The apparatus of claim [18] 14 further comprising transmitting said picture to a central control.

23. (Amended) [The method of claim 20] An apparatus for monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:

a) a vehicle computer programmed to define a planned trailer uncoupling area;

b) a global positioning system coupled to said computer for determining a location of the trailer, said computer being programmed to determine that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area and programmed to automatically securing said trailer when said trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and,

c) wherein said automatically securing said trailer comprises automatically deflating tires of said trailer.

New Claim:

24. A method of monitoring a vehicle trailer uncoupling, comprising:

a) defining a planned trailer uncoupling area;

b) determining that the trailer has been uncoupled outside said planned uncoupling area; and

c) determining a location of the trailer.